

in the active literature, and in 1966 the name was a 'nomen oblitum' and could not have been adopted without Commission action, even if known (Article 23b(ii) of the 1964 Code). Names unused for over 100 years and buried in unused literature are easily overlooked, and have been so countless times by reputable and diligent taxonomists; the belated discovery of such names is not to the discredit of reasonable nomenclatural search.

4. Article 80 of the current Code makes it plain that Wake's (1993) exhortation for 'maintaining the traditional taxonomy until the matter receives formal action' (cited by Dubois in his comment, para. 3) is the explicit regulation under the Code, and not just a personal stand.

5. In the present case no useful purpose would be served by upsetting the established usage for nearly 30 years of a family-group name by one never used since its proposal over 100 years ago, based on a never-used generic name. It is to prevent that sort of mindless adherence to priority that the provisions of Article 79 exist.

Additional references

- Cope, E.D. 1889. The Batrachia of North America. *Bulletin of the United States National Museum*, 34: 1-525.
 Dunn, A. 1926. *The salamanders of the family Plethodontidae*. viii, 441 pp. Smith College, Northampton, Massachusetts.

Comments on the proposed conservation of some mammal generic names first published in Brisson's (1762) *Regnum Animale*
 (Case 2928; see BZN 51: 135-146, 266-267)

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I fully support this application.

1. Brisson's (1762) work should finally be suppressed. It is not binominal and indeed, bearing in mind its early date, there is no reason why it should have been. Yet a number of mammalian generic names in common use have traditionally been dated from the book, and would be threatened were its suppression not accompanied by action for their conservation.

2. The cases of *Tragulus* and *Cuniculus* are especially horrendous. The long-standing fixation of *Cervus javanicus* Osbeck as the type of *Tragulus* (by Ellerman & Morrison-Scott, 1951, as noted by Gentry) depends on the maintenance of Brisson's name; the type of the next available usage of *Tragulus* (i.e. Pallas, 1767) is *Capra pygmaea*, the Royal antelope, which is currently placed in *Neotragus* H. Smith, 1827. Thus we would have:

	Current usage	Prospective name
Royal antelope	<i>Neotragus pygmaeus</i>	<i>Tragulus pygmaeus</i>
Lesser mouse-deer	<i>Tragulus javanicus</i>	<i>Moschiola javanica</i>

This would be an unpleasant and confusing double change of nomenclature.

3. The type of *Cuniculus* Brisson has been fixed as *Mus paca*, the paca. The next available generic name for this species is *Agouti* Lacepède, 1799, a word which is the

same as the vernacular name (in English, French, German and Spanish ('*aguti*'), among others) for quite a different animal, and the same as the name of a type of tegumentary pattern exemplified by the agouti, but not by the paca! The next available usage of the name *Cuniculus* is that of Meyer (1790), which refers to the European rabbit. We would then have:

	Current usage	Prospective name
Paca	<i>Cuniculus paca</i>	<i>Agouti paca</i>
European rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	<i>Cuniculus cuniculus</i>

These changes are just as undesirable as in the *Tragus* case, with the additional element of confusion with a vernacular name.

4. It is true that several of the names it is proposed to conserve are available from other early authors, most of them from Brännich (1771). However, to ignore their use in Brisson and date them from Brännich would be unsafe. This was a period of prolific writing by naturalists (Pallas, Scopoli, Gildenstaedt, Blumenbach, not to mention Linnaeus's own students Osbeck and Thunberg); many of their works are poorly known and investigation of them could well turn up names that might antedate Brännich and so threaten stability.

It is for these reasons that I urge support for Gentry's proposal in full.

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I am writing to comment on the proposed rejection of Brisson's (1762) work, with conservation of 11 mammal generic names. I have read the application by Anthea Gentry with a great deal of interest. The publication is an excellent summary of the situation and I applaud the scholarship demonstrated.

Nevertheless, I find myself in disagreement with portions of the application. I believe stability would best be served by simply rejecting Brisson's work, and by not conserving the generic names listed in the proposals. The application outlines quite nicely why Brisson (1762) is unavailable due to binominal inconsistency, and rejecting it for nomenclatural purposes would be a useful step. This is the course followed by most recent authors and it would be helpful for the Commission to rule on it officially.

However, I see no need to conserve the generic names that have been used by authors over the years, in spite of the arguments for established usage put forth in the application. Nine of the 11 names are available from other authors and have been so attributed by most recent workers. Changing these attributions to revert to Brisson would be more disruptive than stabilizing at this point. The only names that would create major changes are *Glis* and *Cuniculus*.

Most recent authors have rejected *Cuniculus* as being unavailable from Brisson and have used *Agouti* Lacepède, 1799. Continuing this usage in no way requires the adoption of *Cuniculus* Meyer, 1790 as the valid name for the European rabbit, *Oryctolagus* Lilljeborg, 1874, as argued in the application.

The name *Glis* has probably enjoyed the widest usage of the 11 in recent years but the review by Wahlert, Sawitzke & Holden (1993) clearly outlines the problem and a solution, namely the use of *Myoxus* Zimmermann, 1780 and MYOXIDAE in place of the